

WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

MARK LAMOS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR | MICHAEL BARKER, MANAGING DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

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Westport Country Playhouse's New Works Initiative Continues in Fourth Consecutive Year

Westport Country Playhouse's New Works Initiative (NWI) continues in its fourth consecutive year of developing new plays and musicals with playwrights, directors, and other artists, culminating in readings before an invited audience. The NWI 2019 Season kicked off on Wednesday, June 12, with a private reading of the new play, "form of a girl unknown," written by Charly Evon Simpson, and directed by Melissa Crespo.

"Our goal with the New Works Initiative is to nurture and nourish new writing and to seek exciting projects for our five-play seasons," said Mark Lamos, Westport Country Playhouse artistic director.

"form of a girl unknown" follows 12-year-old Amali through difficult transitional moments between childhood and womanhood. Her friendships are changing, her older sister is pregnant, and her own body is transforming before her eyes. When the struggle to figure out who she is and where she fits in the world threatens to overwhelm her, she escapes to the woods in search of answers. Cast members are Alana Raquel Bowers, Toccarra Cash, Shamika Cotton, Marchant Davis, Denise Manning, and Dawn McGee.

Additional 2019 NWI readings will be announced soon.

NWI is funded by the Playhouse's New Works Circle, chaired by Michele Flaster. Founding members are the late Howard J. Aibel, Stephen Corman, Czekaj Artistic Productions, Sandra and Neil DeFeo, Kate and Bob Devlin, Michele and Marc Flaster, Susan Jacobson and David Moskovitz, Judy and Scott Phares, Barbara and John Samuelson, Barbara and John Streicker, and Johnna G. Torson and John McKeon. Annual members are the late Darlene Krenz, Teresa Nardozi, Roz and Bud Siegel, and Marietta Battaglia White.

"We are grateful for the passionate generosity of our New Works Circle members, a group of avid theater supporters who share with me a vested interest in new work and its presence at the Playhouse," said Lamos. "With their help, we are able to continue at an even higher level the Playhouse's long history of taking plays from the page to the stage."

Throughout its 88 years, Westport Country Playhouse has been home to 60 world premiere productions of new plays and musicals, including the recent comedy, "Love and Money," by A. R. Gurney, directed by Mark Lamos, and co-produced with New York's Signature Theatre, and last season's "Thousand Pines," by Matthew Greene, directed by Austin Pendleton.

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For more information about the Playhouse's New Works Initiative, call 203-227-4177. Westport Country Playhouse, 25 Powers Court, off Route 1, Westport. www.westportplayhouse.org. Facebook (Westport Country Playhouse), Twitter (@WCPlayhouse), YouTube (WestportPlayhouse).

ABOUT WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

The mission of Westport Country Playhouse is to enrich, enlighten, and engage the community through the power of professionally produced *theater worth talking about* and the welcoming experience of the Playhouse campus. The not-for-profit Playhouse provides this experience in multiple ways by offering live theater experiences of the highest quality, under the artistic direction of Mark Lamos; educational and community engagement events to further explore the work on stage; the New Works Initiative, a program dedicated to the discovery, development, and production of new live theatrical works; special performances and programs for students and teachers with extensive curriculum support material; Script in Hand play readings to deepen relationships with audiences and artists; the renowned Woodward Internship Program during the summer months for aspiring theater professionals; Family Festivities presentations to delight young and old alike and to promote reading through live theater; youth performance training through Broadway Method Academy, Westport Country Playhouse's resident conservatory program; and the beautiful and historic Playhouse campus open for enjoyment and community events year-round.

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